

BREASTFEEDING POLICY

Breastfeeding is important for infants’ nutrition. Australian and international health authorities recommend exclusive breastfeeding until around 6 months. At around 6 months, solid food can then be offered while breastfeeding is continued until 12 months or longer if the mother and baby wish (NSW Ministry of Health, 2014, p. 10).

Our Service respects and supports mothers’ wishes to continue to breastfeed, as we understand that returning to work is a common reason for discontinuing breastfeeding. We provide a welcoming environment for mothers to continue to breastfeed or express breastmilk.

All educators understand their role and responsibilities to ensure the safe storage and handling of breastmilk and adhere to the feeding practices outlined by families.

NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1.3	Healthy Lifestyles	Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
78	Food and beverages
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures

RELATED POLICIES

Bottled Safety and Preparation Policy Health and Safety Policy	Nutrition and Food Safety Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
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PURPOSE

Our Service recognises the importance of breast milk for the developing infant and will ensure that all families are aware of our commitment to supporting mothers to continue to provide their child with breast milk whilst at the Service.

SCOPE

This policy applies to families, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

An important function of breast milk is to provide the mother's antibodies to the infant, assisting in the prevention of illness whilst the immune system is developed. Mothers of infants up to 12 months old will be supported to continue to breastfeed, whether by providing expressed breast milk or visiting the Service to feed their child.

Management, Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible Person will ensure:

- families are provided with breastfeeding information during enrolment and orientation
- the Service is identified as '*Breastfeeding Friendly*' (see Resources section below)
- a quiet, clean, and comfortable place is provided for mothers to comfortably breastfeed or express breast milk
- easily accessible brochures, pamphlets and other resources about breastfeeding are available for families
- staff are aware that it is a mother's legal right to breastfeed
- an individual breastfeeding support plan is developed in consultation with families, including contingency plans for if the Service does not have enough expressed breast milk to meet the child's needs
- literature on the benefits of breastfeeding is updated and distributed to staff as required to support understanding and 'best practice'.

Educators will:

- provide mothers with a private, clean and quiet place to breastfeed their children or express milk
- store and handle expressed breast milk in accordance with the *Bottle Safety and Preparation Policy*
- provide daily information to families regarding infant's feeding intake
- communicate regularly with families about infant and children's feeding patterns and routines
- establish and maintain connections with local breastfeeding support networks
- refer mothers with breastfeeding concerns to appropriate resources, including support services offered by VIC Health, Australian Breastfeeding Association groups or private lactation consultants.

Families will:

- be informed during orientation of requirements relating to the safe transportation of breast milk between home and the Service, and labelling bottles of breast milk
- be informed of where they are able to breastfeed or express milk
- be encouraged to communicate regularly with educators about children's bottle and feeding requirements.

Staff/Educator Training

Our Service will:

- familiarise new educators and staff with the *Breastfeeding Policy* and offer appropriate training as required, including alternate strategies for feeding if an infant will not accept a bottle
- ensure all educators that have responsibility for the care of infants and children are able to provide basic breastfeeding information and are able to refer mothers with breastfeeding concerns to appropriate resources
- ensure staff encourage parents to develop babies' individual breastfeeding support plans and regularly update their plans, with support from VIC Health, Australian Breastfeeding Association groups or private lactation consultants where appropriate.
- ensure all educators promote exclusive breastfeeding until babies are about 6 months old with continued breastfeeding to one year, whilst showing due respect and support to mothers who cannot, or do not wish to breastfeed.

Support for Educators and Staff who are Breastfeeding

The Service will:

- make all reasonable efforts to support a staff member's request to continue breastfeeding their child
- provide breastfeeding employees with a flexible schedule to allow for breastfeeding or expressing breast milk for their infant
- provide breastfeeding employees with a private, clean and quiet place to breastfeed their infant or express milk.

RESOURCES

To request a free *Breastfeeding-friendly zone* sticker for Service entry doors or windows go to:

www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-stickers (sheet 2)

Note: This image can also be copied and printed.

Register for *Breastfeeding welcome here* Service for stickers, posters, and more:

<https://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome>

SOURCE

Australian Breastfeeding Association: www.breastfeeding.asn.au

Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. (2013). Eat for health: Infant feeding guidelines: Information for health workers.

https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n56b_infant_feeding_summary_130808.pdf

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Education and Care National Regulations. (2011).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020)

NSW Ministry of Health. (2014). Caring for children birth to 5 years: Food, nutrition and learning experiences.

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal/Publications/caring-for-children-manual.pdf>

Safe Food and Health Service Executive. (2013). How to prepare your baby’s bottle.

State Government Victoria Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (2014). *Promoting Breastfeeding Victorian Breastfeeding Guidelines*

REVIEW

POLICY REVIEWED	February 2021	NEXT REVIEW DATE	February 2022
MODIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy reviewed- minor editing (no capital letter in dot points), page numbers added • additional Victorian Government resource added • sources checked for currency 		
POLICY REVIEWED	PREVIOUS MODIFICATIONS	NEXT REVIEW DATE	
February 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition to opening statement • Sources checked for currency. • New sources/references added. 	February 2021	
February 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed name to Breast Feeding Policy • Deleted information already contained in Bottle safety and preparation policy. • Added resources for stickers & resources. • Rewrote statement and purpose. • Additional information added to points. • Rearranged the order of points for better flow. 	February 2020	
February 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added ‘related policies’ list 	February 2019	

October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the references to comply with revised National Quality Standard 	February 2018
February 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New policy created with the new format Research conducted from Get up and Grow, which has formulated this policy 	February 2018